(GSPCL), transportation companies like GAIL (India) Limited (GAIL) and Assam Gas Company, officials from concerned Ministries/Departments like Power, Fertilizers and Steel and Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) suppliers like Shell India, apart from Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Director General Hydrocarbon (DGH) and Planning Commission.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) The representative of Government of Andhra Pradesh has been included in all the three Sub-Groups.

Decline in sale of diesel

2265. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR:
SHRI R.P. GOENKA:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is fact that there has been a continuous drop in the demand for diesel in the country during the last two years and the diesel sales witnessed a 3.2 percent decline during the last six months, over the corresponding period last year;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether it is also a fact that large scale adulteration of diesel with the cheaper kerosene has been continuing over a long period; and

(d) if so, the details of specific studies undertaken, if any, and steps taken to make such adulteration unprofitable?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN): (a) and (b) The growth in consumption of diesel for the years 2001-02, 2002-03 and April-September, 2003 was as under:

Year	Percentage Growth
2001-02	-3.7
2002-03	0.3
April-Sep, 03 (Provisional)	-3.7

The reasons for drop in consumption of diesel *inter-alia* include substitution by other fuels like kerosene and LDO; increasing use of CNG as transportation fuel in Delhi and Mumbai; slow industrial growth, etc.

(c) and (d) As per the Industry report, the possibility of diversion of kerosene for adulteration with diesel cannot be ruled out. With a view to curb diversion of kerosene imports by private parties, the Government *vide* Notification No. 24/(RE-2003)/2002-07 dated 25-11-03 has canalized the imports of kerosene through State Trading Enterprises. Also, at the request of Government of India, some of the state Governments have increased sales tax rates on kerosene marketed through the parallel marketing scheme.

Oman's investment in Oil Sector

2266. MISS MABEL REBELLO:
SHRI B.J. PANDA:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Oman has shown interest in investing in Oil Sector in India;

(b) what are the earlier stakes of Oman in the Oil and fertilizer sector; and

(c) what is the status of the gas pipeline project between the two countries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN): (a) and (b) Oman Government, through Oman Oil Company, has shown interest in the oil sector by participating with Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited in setting up of a refinery at Bina (Madhya Pradesh). Till now, Oman Oil Company has invested Rs. 75.5 crore in this project.

Oman has so far made no investment in any fertilizer company in India.

(c) It was mutually agreed to shelve this project as its technical and financial viability could not be established.